

Charles D. Mason House
1201 4th Avenue
Fourth Ward Neighborhood
Altoona
Blair County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5840

HABS
PA,
7-ALTO,
64-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

CHARLES D. MASON HOUSE

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Location: 1201 4th Avenue

Date of Erection: 1888 or 1889

Description: This two-and-a-half-story frame dwelling has a clipped side-gable roof. There is a double-gable dormer in front with fishscale shingles. A two-story bay on the street side of the house also has a side-gable roof. The first story of the bay is canted while the second story is square. With its wood stick-work combination and windows with colored lights, this house not only outshines its closest neighbors, it is one of a very few with this type of decoration.

History: James Rodgers, a machinist, was living in a small frame house on this site in 1870, but Charles D. Mason had the present house built in 1888 or 1889. The assessed value of the new house was \$2,100 in 1890.

William Westbrook, who operated an ice cream store on 8th Avenue, purchased this house for \$1,625 in 1891. In 1901, Samuel Shields, a railroader, and A. Westrak, a clerk, were boarding at the Westbrook residence. William's widow and son still occupied the house in 1919.

Harry G. Anderson, an inspector, purchased the property from William Westbrook's heirs in 1923. Harry's widow, Florence, turned the house over to McVey's, Inc., for \$3,500 in 1945. McVey's were realtors, property managers, and lessors of chain stores. They sold the property in 1946 to John and Marie Walters for \$4,200. John worked for the Pennsylvania Railroad as a laborer.

The house was sold in 1961 to Paul Franco, a brakeman for the railroad, who rented the house out. Ralph W. Arthur, Jr., manager of Royal Tile, bought the house in 1969 also as a rental unit. Since 1971, 1201 4th Ave. has been owned by James G. Teeter, et al.

Sources: Maps: 1888, 1894. City directories. Tax assessment records. Deed books: W/135, 62/176, 82/644, 83/70, 305/618, 527/72-74, 784/135, 896/42, 923/188.

Project Information: This report was part of a larger project to document the city of Altoona, Pennsylvania. The project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER), Robert Kapsch, chief, at the request of America's Industrial Heritage Project (AIHP), Randy Cooley, director. Overviews of the history of the city (HABS No. PA-5784) and the fourth ward neighborhood (HABS No. PA-5786) provide context for these buildings as well as a comprehensive list of sources. See also additional HABS reports on buildings in the city and other neighborhoods.

This report was prepared by Nancy Spiegel in the summer of 1989 under the supervision of HABS senior historian Alison K. Hoagland and Kim E. Wallace, supervisory historian. Spiegel's and other project historians' work was published as Railroad City: Four Historic Neighborhoods in Altoona, Pennsylvania (Washington, D.C.: HABS/HAER, National Park Service, 1990), edited by Kim E. Wallace, supervisory historian, and Sara Amy Leach, HABS historian.